AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, the network arrangement comprising:

a first media gateway controller configured to control a first gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol,

a second media gateway controller configured to control a second gateway, wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, and

a computer comprising a gateway address translator incorporating proxies for said first and second gateways respectively, wherein said gateway address translator is configured to provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways, and a virtual bearer function for messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

2. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein said gateway address translator comprises gateway proxies, one for each of said first and second gateways, and virtual gateways, one for each of said first and second media gateway controllers.

3. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 2, wherein communication between said first and second media gateway controllers is provided via a signalling network.

4. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 3, wherein said signalling network comprises a Common Channel Signaling 7 network.

5. (Original) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 2 wherein said gateway address translator comprises software provided in machine readable form on a storage medium.

6. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 5, wherein said gateway address translator comprises a software application running on one of said first and second media gateway controllers.

7. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of said first and second media gateway controllers is constituted by a distributed media gateway controller pair providing separate ingress and egress functions.

8. (Previously Presented) A communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 7, wherein at least one of said first and second media gateway controllers is constituted by a soft switch.

9. (Currently Amended) A system comprising:

a computer; and

a gateway address translator executable in the computer and for use in a communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services and comprising a first media gateway controller configured to control a first gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and wherein the communications network arrangement further comprises a second media gateway controller configured to control a second gateway, wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the gateway address translator executable in the computer comprising:

gateway proxies, one for each of said first and second gateways, and

virtual gateways, one for each of said first and second media gateway controllers,

wherein said gateway proxies provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways, and wherein said virtual gateways provide a virtual bearer function for messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

10. (Original) A gateway address translator as claimed in claim 7, and comprising software provided in machine readable form on a storage medium.

11. (Previously Presented) A gateway address translator as claimed in claim 8, and incorporated in one of the first and second media gateway controllers.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services in a communications network arrangement comprising a first media gateway controller controlling a first gateway, and a second media gateway controller controlling a second gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the method comprising:

provisioning, by a gateway address translator executed in a computer, proxies of said first and second gateways so as to provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways, said messaging utilizing the first protocol between the first media gateway controller and the first gateway, and utilizing the second protocol between the second media gateway controller and the second gateway, and

providing, by the gateway address translator executed in the computer, a virtual bearer function for enabling messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers provided with respective first and second operating protocols.

13. (Previously Presented) A method of interfacing media gateway controllers and media gateways having different operating protocols in a communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, the method comprising:

creating, in a computer, proxies of said media gateways; and

said proxies in the computer communicating with respective ones of said media gateway controllers utilizing respective ones of different operating protocols, wherein the media gateway controllers are provisioned with corresponding addresses of the proxies rather than corresponding addresses of said media gateways.

14. (Currently Amended) A communications network arrangement providing voice over IP or voice over ATM services, comprising: a plurality of media gateways and a plurality of computers comprising respective media gateway controllers configured to control the corresponding media gateways, wherein said media gateway controllers employ different operating protocols, wherein plural pairs of the media gateway controllers and media gateways are provided where each of the pairs includes one corresponding media gateway controller and one corresponding media gateway, and wherein communications between said media gateway and media gateway controller in each of the pairs includes communications using a corresponding one of the different operating protocols, and wherein the media gateway controllers are provisioned with corresponding addresses of the proxies rather than corresponding addresses of the gateways.

15. (Currently Amended) A non-transitory machine-readable storage medium storing software to control delivery of voice over IP or voice over ATM services in a communications network arrangement comprising a first media gateway controller controlling a first gateway, and a second media gateway controller controlling a second gateway, wherein the first media gateway controller is provided with a first operating protocol, and the second media gateway controller is provided with a second, different operating protocol, the software upon execution performing:

provisioning proxies of said first and second gateways so as to provide a relay function for messaging between each of said first and second media gateway controllers and the corresponding one of the first and second gateways utilizing the corresponding one of the first and second protocols, and

providing a virtual bearer function for enabling messaging between said first and second media gateway controllers.

16. (Previously Presented) The communications network arrangement as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of one of the proxies instead of an address of the first gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of another one of the proxies instead of an address of the second gateway.

17. (Currently Amended) The gateway address translator as claimed in claim 9, wherein a first one of the gateway proxies is configured to communicate with the first media gateway controller using the first operating protocol, and a second one of the gateway proxies is configured to communicate with the second media gateway controller using the second operating protocol, wherein an address of the first gateway proxy rather than an address of the first gateway is provisioned at the first media gateway controller, and an address of the second gateway proxy rather than an address of the second gateway is provisioned at the second media gateway controller.

18. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of one of the proxies instead of an address of the first gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of another one of the proxies instead of an address of the second gateway.

19. (New) The machine-readable storage medium of claim 15, wherein the first media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of one of the proxies instead of an address of the first gateway, and wherein the second media gateway controller is provisioned with an address of another one of the proxies instead of an address of the second gateway.